



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX**

**75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105**

**NOV 6 2013**

Manuel D. Hernandez-Bey  
#09766-035  
USP Atwater P.O. Box 019001  
Atwater, CA 95301

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request EPA-R9-2013-009514

Dear Mr. Hernandez-Bey:

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act request regarding the United States Penitentiary Atwater and former Castle Air Force Base.

The Former Castle Air Force Base is currently listed on the Comprehensive Environmental Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) National Priorities List, and remediation efforts associated with the CERCLA program are managed by the Air Force. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State California Environmental Protection Agencies Department of Toxic Substances and Disease Control (DTSC) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board RWQCB provide regulatory oversight of the CERCLA remediation activities. Additionally, the State Agencies oversee other environmental cleanup programs, such as UST investigations associated with petroleum-only contamination.

The Air Force maintains the Administrative Record (AR) for the former Castle Air Force Base, and electronic copy records that are responsive to your request can be obtained free of charge from the following website: <http://afipaar.lackland.af.mil/ar/> or at the Merced County Library, Central Branch, 2100 O Street, Merced, CA 95430. You may also obtain Air Force FOIA information at <http://www.afcec.af.mil/foia/index.asp> and <http://www.foia.af.mil/>.

Information responsive to your six questions is enclosed. If you would like to obtain an index of documents, or hard copy of any of the documents available at EPA to support your request, the EPA would require an Assurance of Payment Letter for research and production fees above \$25. If you have any questions, please contact Nadia Burke of this office at 415-972-3187.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Loren Henning", is written over the typed name.

Loren Henning  
Section Chief, Air Force and DOE Section  
Federal Facilities and Site Cleanup Branch

Enclosures: Response to Questions

**#1: What was United States Penitentiary Atwater built on top of?**

The United States Penitentiary Atwater Complex is located on a portion of the former Castle Air Force Base.

**#2: What was the land- environment like before U.S.P. Atwater was built on this site of land?**

**#3: Is it true, this site, was previously a US Airforce base? If, yes, did the US Airforce, bury or store any munitions, chemicals, petroleum, oil, or toxic chemicals in the ground, where today USP Atwater is built.**

A former weapons storage area and practice grenade range was located on this site. They have been investigated to confirm the absence of possible contamination and explosives. The Air Force has investigated and clean-closed many of these sites prior to property transfer, and is responsible along with the Bureau of Prisons for any on-going monitoring required to ensure protection of human health and the environment, such as Institutional Controls that require prevention of any potential unsafe exposures of toxic chemicals left in place above levels safe for residential use. You may locate documents associated with the former Castle Air Force Base environmental investigation and cleanup at <http://afarpaar.lackland.af.mil/ar/> or contact the US Air Force project manager for more detailed documentation associated with the investigation and cleanup:

Stanley Pehl  
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
AFCEE/EXC (ATTN: STANLEY PEHL)  
2261 HUGHES AVE STE 155  
LACKLAND AFB TX 78236-9853  
Phone: 210-395-8238  
Email: stanley.pehl@us.af.mil

**#4: Where does the drinking water derive from that I drink at USP Atwater?**

**#5: When tested at the initial, first flow of water from the pump-station, before traveling through the miles and miles of water pipes, to USP Atwater for me to drink, what toxins, pollutants, and quality is the water I'm drinking at USP Atwater.**

**#6: How often is the water tested for bacteria or viruses, or algae, that is harmful to my internal organs, at USP Atwater?**

The Bureau of Prisons would be responsible for the supply, management, testing, and treatment of drinking water according to all Federal, State, and local legal requirements for safe drinking water. Please contact the FOIA Office for the Bureau of Prisons, and contact the representatives at the DTSC and Central Valley Water Quality Control Board for more information on the local water supply and requirements associated with the cleanup:

Wanda M. Hunt, Chief, FOIA/PA Section  
FOIA/Privacy Act Requests  
Federal Bureau of Prisons  
Department of Justice  
Room 841, HOLC Building  
320 First Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20534  
Phone: (202) 514-6655  
Email: ogc\_efoia@bop.gov

Theresa McGarry (TMcGarry@dtsc.ca.gov)  
California Department of Toxic Substances Control  
Sacramento Field Office  
8800 Cal Center Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95826-3200  
Phone: 916-255-3664

Christopher Cochran, R.G. (cmcochrane@waterboards.ca.gov)  
State of California Environmental Protection Agency  
Central Valley California Water Quality Control Board  
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